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CEREBUS

GOING HOME

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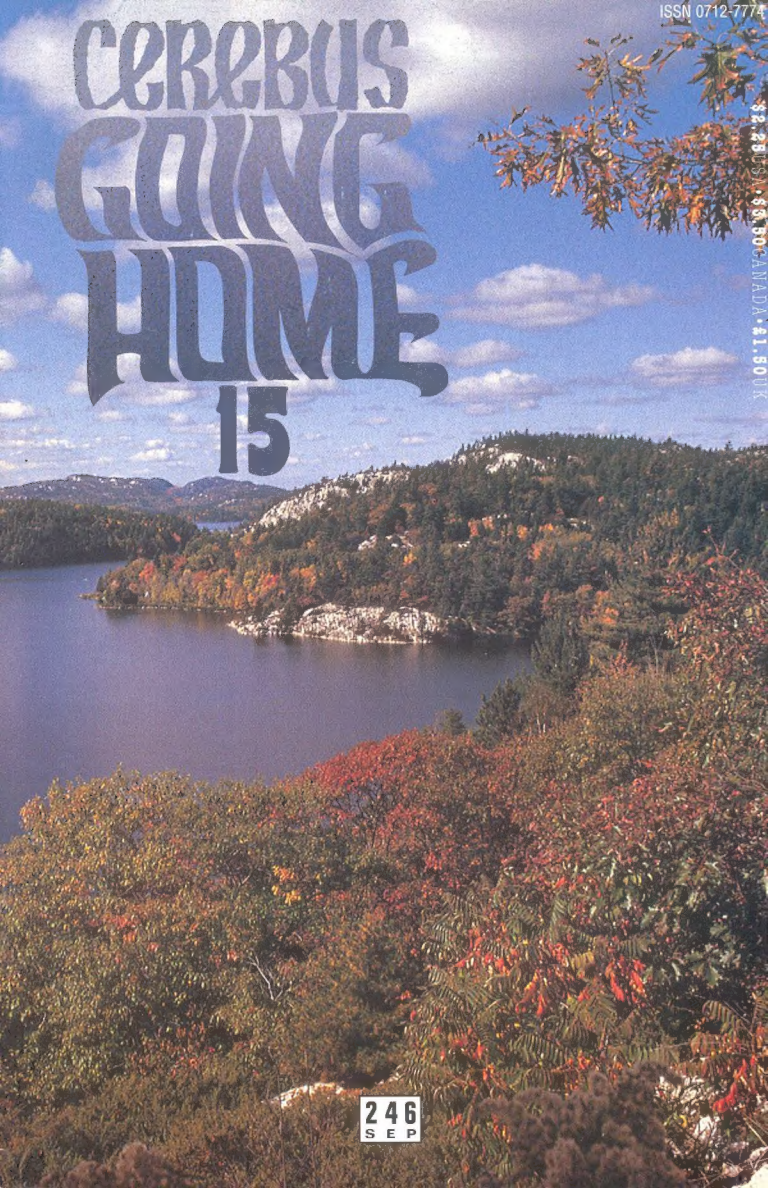

246
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CEREBUS
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GOING HOME

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BOOK ONE
Sudden Moves
(Cerebus 232 to 239)

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BOOK TWO
Fall and the River
(Cerebus 240 to 250)

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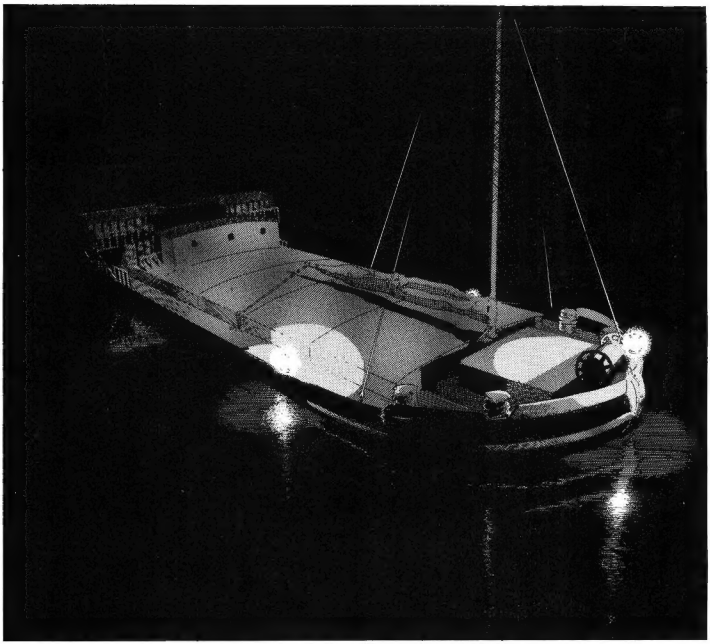
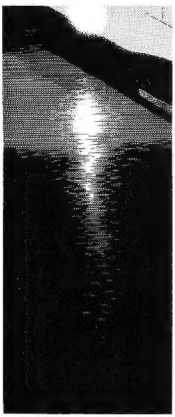
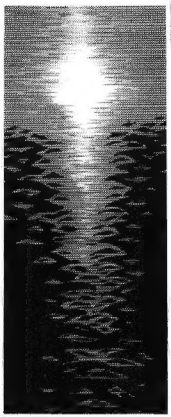
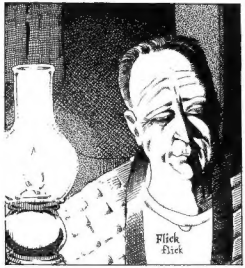






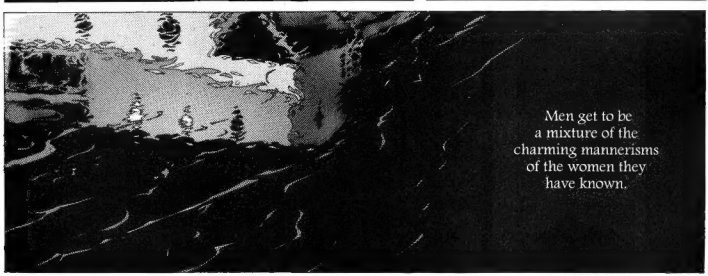
She was
the tongue of flame
that made the
firelight
vivid.

Passing within the radius of a girl's perfume



She comes up to people when she meets them as if she were going to kiss them on the mouth, or walk right through them, looking them straight in the eyes—then stops a bare foot away and says her Hello in a very disarming understatement of a voice. This approach is her nearest to Gloria's personality. Gloria's was always a vast surprise.

Her voice and the drooping of her eyes when she finished speaking, like a sort of exercise in control, fascinated him. He had felt that they both tolerated something, that each knew half of some secret about people and life, and that if they rushed toward each other, there would be a romantic communication of almost unbelievable intensity.



Men get to be a mixture of the charming mannerisms of the women they have known.

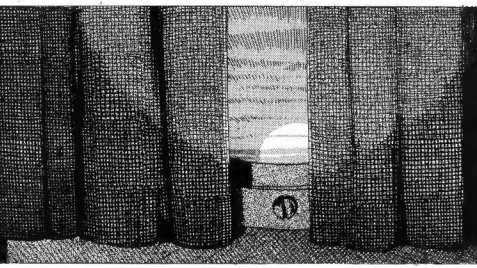
A few little unattached sections of her sun-warm hair blew back and trickled against the lobe of the ear closest to him, as if to indicate that she was listening.

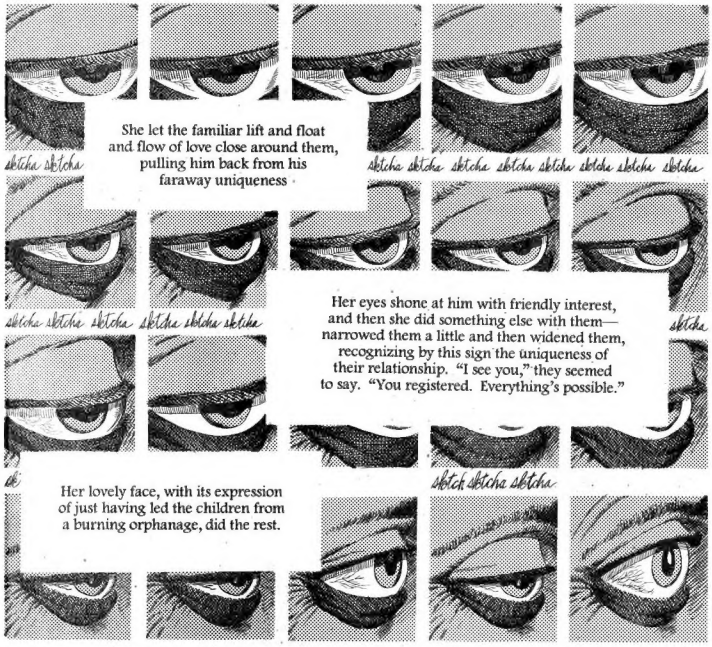
She carried space around with her, into which he could step and be alone with their two selves.

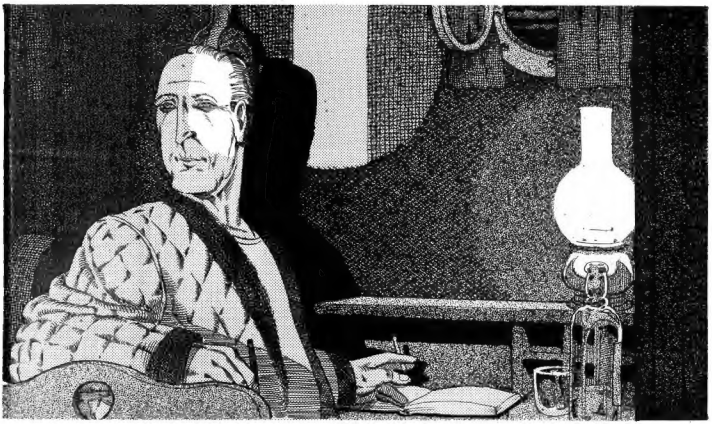
Sketcha Sketcha Sketcha Sketcha
Sketcha Sketcha Sketcha Sketcha
Sketchsketchsketch Sketcha Sketch
Sketch Sketch Sketcha Sketch
Sketch Sketch Sketcha Sketcha
Sketcha Sketcha Sketchasketcha
Sketcha Sketcha Sketchasketch

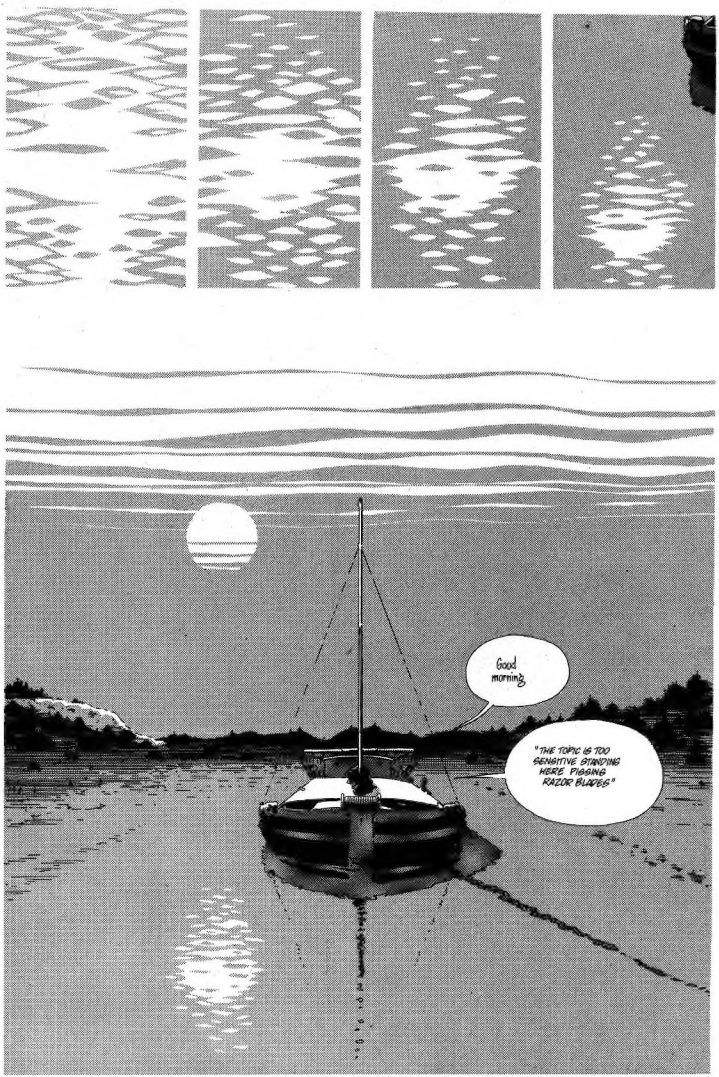
They talked from their hearts—with the half-truths and evasions peculiar to that organ, which has never been famed as an instrument of precision.

Her low voice wooed him casually from some impersonal necessity of its own.

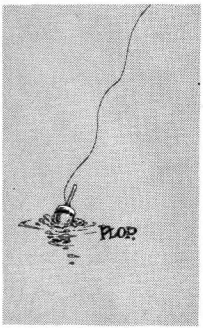


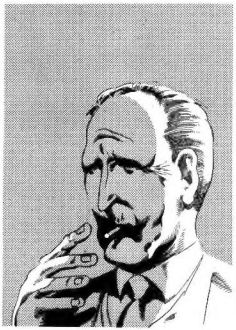

She let the familiar lift and float and flow of love close around them, pulling him back from his faraway uniqueness
Her eyes shone at him with friendly interest, and then she did something else with them—narrowed them a little and then widened them, recognizing by this sign the uniqueness of their relationship. "I see you," they seemed to say. "You registered. Everything's possible."
Her lovely face, with its expression of just having led the children from a burning orphanage, did the rest.




Good morning.
"THE TOPIC IS TOO SENSITIVE STANDING HERE PLUCKING RAZOR BLADES"

I BEG your...
OH!
The... ahem
The PHRASE that someone had scrawled over the... EUPHEMISM... behind your tavern.
AYE.
THE ONE CERBERUS WAS TRYING TO REMEMBER THE OTHER NIGHT IN YOUR STATEROOM
CERBERUS JUST REMEMBERED IT A FEW MINUTES AGO.
WELL.


PLOP



That IS story material ISN'T it.
"The topic is too..."?

"... SENSITIVE..."
"...standing home pissing razor blades."
CEREBUS USED TO SEE IT EVERY TIME CEREBUS TOOK A LEAK
LITTLE TINY LETTERS
SO CEREBUS THOUGHT ABOUT IT A LOT
WHO WROTE IT?
WHAT WAS "THE TOPIC"?
WHY WAS "THE TOPIC" "TOO SENSITIVE"?
?
OH!
HEH-HEH
HE-

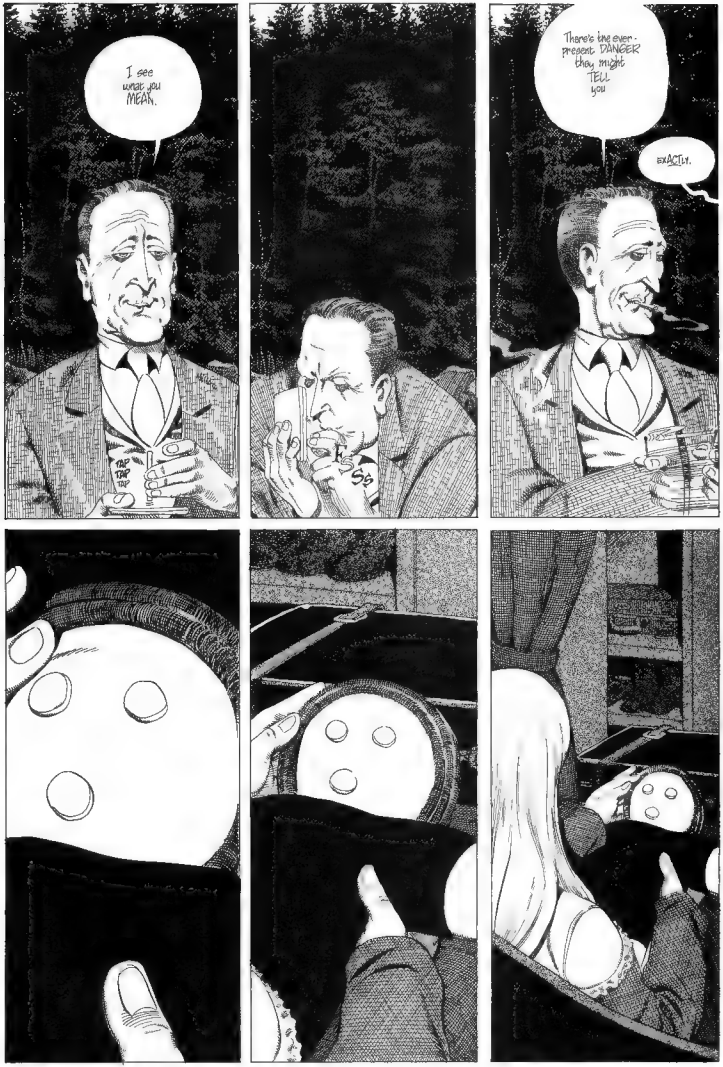
GLP
It sounds like a case of venereal disease, to me
You know "The Clap"
(mumble)
(Don't mention it)
"THE CLAP"
Mm. The BURNING sensation in the tip of the penis during urination
It SOUNDS as if THAT's what he's EXPERIENCING and he's... (mmm let's SEE now)
He's AFRAID to talk to the woman that he THINKS he's GOTTEN it from...?
CEREBUS NEVER THOUGHT OF THAT
He's AFRAID to talk to the woman he THINKS he's given it TO!
OR! Even BETTER
SHE's sitting out in your tavern waiting for him to COME BACK
and HE's trying to come up with WHAT he's going to SAY
and HOW he's going to SAY it

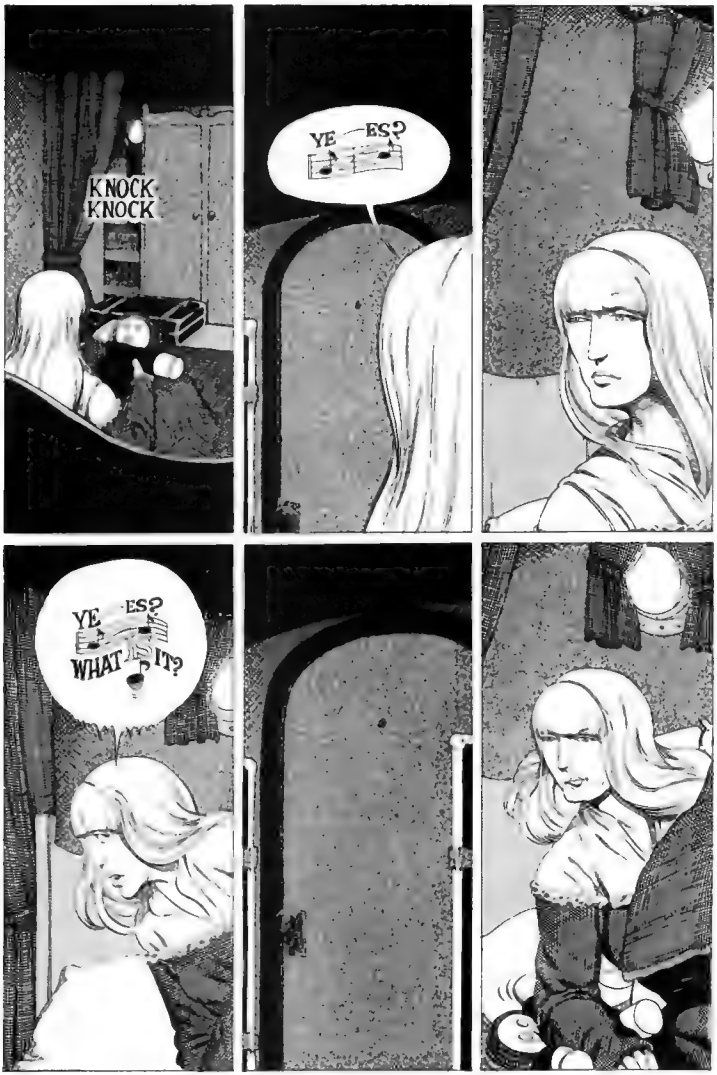
HUNH!
I'D be tempted to play it for LAUGHS. Combsedding, the mantis... fiancée..? ...yes, fiancée I think... DREAMILY picturing their future wife together.
while the poor hugger is DOUBLED OVER in the "LOO" trying to figure out how to explain to her about certain... unforseen... PLUMBING malfunctions she should be experiencing any MINUTE now
HA HA HA HA
I'm sure the only REAL laughs would be those issuing forth from my LITERATURE WARDEN as she GLEEFULLY stamped "REVOKED" over every inch of my Artistic License
Even IF I could... "GET AWAY WITH IT"
time.
me Criminals being what they are, I'd have to "CREAM IT UP"... YOU know...
"WARNING, razor blades."
THAT kind of thing
MMM. "RISING RAZOR BLADES"

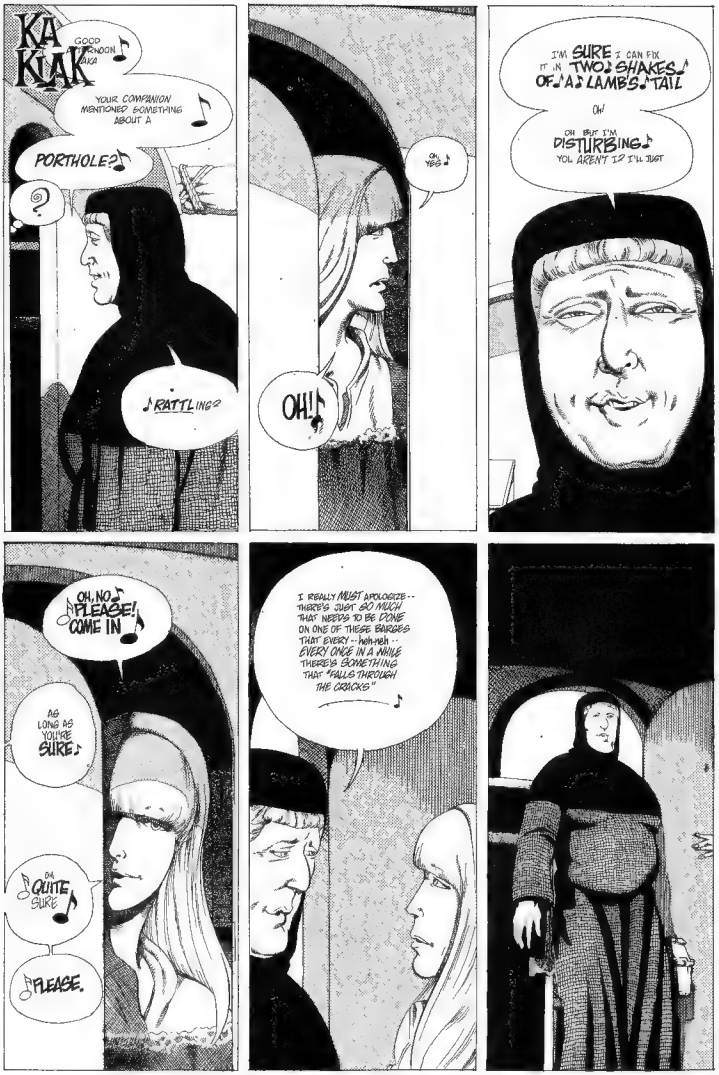
"PEEing" Yeah? Yes... exactly
Flick
Hear? This guy that Cerebus was telling you about? He always used to say that
"Men PISS"
"WOMEN PEE"
Really
That's Awfully good

I wish I had the NERVE to use it in a story
Koff
Go'
mmm
Go how 'ie
Whoa Tavens
long morning?
JAKA?

SHE WENT BACK TO BED
SAID SHE WAS AWAKE MOST OF THE NIGHT
THINKING ABOUT THINGS
REALLY!
.FLOW.
I MEAN
IT'S JU-
WONDERFUL!
THAT
UHHHH
THAT SHE'S
SETTING
HER -UH- SLEEP
NOW.
What
um
What... THINGS... WAS SHE THINKING ABOUT?
WITH WOMEN IT'S BETTER NOT TO ASK.
FLIP

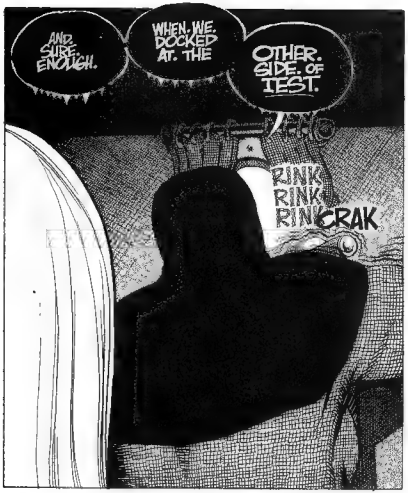

I see what you MEAN.
TAP TAP TAP
There's the ever-present DANGER they might TELL you
EXACTLY.


KNOCK KNOCK
YE ES?
YE ES?
WHAT IT?


KA KLAK
GOOD AFTERNOON, KA KLAK
YOUR COMPANION MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT A
PORTHOLE?
?
♪RATTLING?
OH, YES!♪
OH!♪
I'M SURE I CAN FIX IT IN TWO♪ SHAKES♪ OF♪ A♪ LAMB'S♪ TAIL
OH!
OH, BUT I'M DISTURBING♪ YOU, AREN'T I? I'LL JUST
OH, NO♪ PLEASE! COME IN♪
AS LONG AS YOU'RE SURE♪
OH♪ QUITE SURE♪
♪PLEASE.
I REALLY MUST APOLOGIZE -- THERE'S JUST SO MUCH THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE ON ONE OF THESE BARGES THAT EVERY -- heh-heh -- EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE THERE'S SOMETHING THAT "FALLS THROUGH THE CRACKS"
♪

YOU KNOW? THE TRIP BEFORE LAST THERE WAS ANOTHER ♪ YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAD THIS STATEROOM
YES, SO
OH?
A LOVELY ♪ LITTLE THING SHE WAS TOO.
JUST LOVELY ♪
THIS PORTHOLE OVER HERE, ISN'T IT?
YES
YES, I THOUGHT SO
♪ ANYWAY
THIS YOUNG WOMAN WAS 'TRAVELLING' WITH THIS 'COMPANION' OF HERS AND - ONE DAY - I FOUND HER CRYING HER HEART OUT ♪
♪ WELL! IT TURNED OUT THAT..
THAT SHE HAD DECIDED THAT SHE DIDN'T WANT TO..
'TRAVEL'
..WITH HIM ANYMORE
SNAP
SNAP

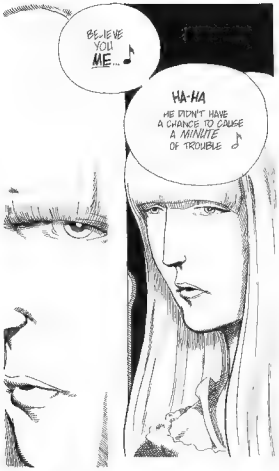
BUT SHE WAS AFRAID OF HIM, YOU SEE
CLATTER CLATTER CLINK
AFRAID THAT HE MIGHT TRY TO DO HER AN INJURY♪
IF SHE TRIED TO LEAVE HIM ... BECAUSE...♪
... WELL ...
BECAUSE MEN DON'T UNDERSTAND♪
ABOUT LOVE SOMETIMES ♪
DO♪ THEY
I TOLD HER NOT TO WORRY ABOUT IT ... I TOLD HER:
♪ "AS MY MOTHER USED TO SAY:
'WHERE THERE'S A WILL♪
THERE'S A WAY'!"♪


AND SURE ENOUGH.
WHEN WE DOCKED AT THE
OTHER SIDE OF IEST.
RINK RINK RINK
CRAK

THAT'S GOT T

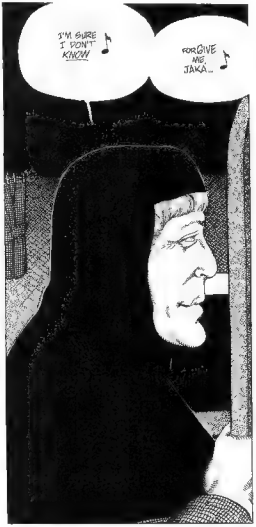
THERE WERE TWO OF OUR LADY'S FINEST EMPOWERMENT OFFICERS
RIGHT THERE WAITING.
WELL!
SNAP
SNAP

THEY EACH TOOK ONE OF THAT DISAGREEABLE YOUNG FELLOW'S ARMS
AND THEY
LED HIM AWAY


BE...IEVE YOU ME...
HA-HA
HE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO CAUSE A MINUTE OF TROUBLE

WHY ARE YOU
TELLING ME... ALL THIS?

?
Ka Klak


I'M SURE I DON'T KNOW
FORGIVE ME JAKA...

I CAN BE SO...
SILLY
SOMETIMES
Klak

CHASING SCOTT

GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS

"Remember when you were a kid and the boys didn't like the girls? Only sissies liked girls? What I'm trying to tell you is that nothing's changed. You think boys grow out of not liking girls, but we don't grow out of it. We just grow horny. That's the problem. We mix up liking pussy for liking girls. Believe me *one couldn't have less to do with the other."*

According to his 1971 *Playboy* interview, Jules Feiffer eliminated this line of dialogue—spoken by the Jonathan character when he is in his forties—from the first draught of his *Carnal Knowledge* screenplay, because it "seemed too on the nose and because I'd rather have audiences figure it out for themselves than say it for them."

It seems as insightful to me now, at 43, as it seemed to me when I first read it at the age of 15.

But it does seem to leave aside a central fact—that, even at an age when boys *ostensibly* don't like girls, when "only sissies" like girls, boys *do* like girls. However secretly—*very* secretly before puberty—we *adore* girls. *Specific* girls.

Beautiful girls.

That is, I agree with Mr. Feiffer Except I think that (like most men of his generation) he is so eager to curry favour with the unfairer sex that he, essentially, capitulates to their viewpoint. "Liking pussy," from the female standpoint, indeed, has very little to do with "liking girls." However, I think it irrefutable from a purely honest, purely subjective *masculine* standpoint (as irrefutable as respiration, pupil dilation, heart rate, diastolic rate, systolic rate) that "having sex with a beautiful girl," "being in the company of a beautiful girl," and "seeing a beautiful girl" would all—irrefutably—rate much higher than, say, having a rousing discussion of birthing techniques with a portly, middle-aged woman pulled at random from the local bus station, however *likable* the man in question finds the woman to be and however *un*likable he finds the girl. His vital functions would not lie, no matter how much his societally imposed or self-imposed political correctnesses might wish them to do so.

The cute ones want to be pretty, the pretty ones want to be sexy, the sexy ones want to be gorgeous, the gorgeous ones want to be stunning, and the stunning ones just want heroin.

That's, um, one of my own.

"*Life* isn't fair," my Dad used to say, always with a decided emphasis on the subject of the sentence. That seems to me nowhere more truthful than in the respective ages of greatest attractiveness for men and women. Or, rather (more pointedly), for men and *girls*.

It is certainly unfair that when a girl hits her peak of physical attractiveness at the age of seventeen or eighteen, her interests lie (almost without exception) in the direction of men much, much older than she is. Or, at least, it *seems* unfair to the seventeen- and eighteen-year-old boys who desire her (usually with a greater sincerity than those men who are much, much older than she is).*

It is equally unfair that when a man hits his peak of attractiveness much, much later, his interest—his *genuine* interest, his *irrefutable* interest—remains with the seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds.** Or, at least, it *seems* unfair to his female contemporaries who bulge where they do not wish to bulge, sag where they do not wish to sag, and have wrinkles where they prefer that they didn't have wrinkles. Female contemporaries tend to compensate for these disadvantages by being shrill, strident, hectoring, and obnoxious on the subject of seventeen- and eighteen-year-old girls. That they have had a remarkable success in getting their male—as opposed to masculine—contemporaries to parrot this criticism, to me, really must be counted one of the great "sleight of hand" tricks of the ages.

His *genuine* interest, his *irrefutable* interest is, for the unfairer sex, an unhappy truth. But, it seems to me, if the ladies and "ladies" plan to stick around and continue "helping" to remodel reality as we all know it, it is worth asserting that progress, societal or individual, can only be made from a *truthful* foundation—*however* unhappy—and that no progress is possible from an *un*truthful foundation—however "happy" a lie it is that warms the cockles of whatever it is that the gender opposite is using for a heart these days.

I say all this by way of preamble in the hope (perhaps futile, perhaps not) of suppressing the unnatural impulse which the bulging, sagging, wrinkled, and totalitarian feminist "regime" has imposed on several generations of males (and some men) who might otherwise derive the same genuine value that I do from these excerpts from F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Notebooks* under the heading "Descriptions of Girls":

* To those seventeen- and eighteen-year-old boys, let me reassure you that your time will come Don't settle for "what you can get" in your teens and twenties, and you'll pretty much have your pick of USDA prime cut in your thirties and forties. None of whom (the part you won't want to hear) is worth the paper she's printed on.

** We *could* equip every man on the planet with a little "vital functions" monitor that goes "boop boop boop" at varying frequencies depending on his *genuine* interest, his *irrefutable* interest, but what, ladies and "ladies," would be served by going to all that trouble just to tell us what we already know?

She was not more than eighteen—a dark little beauty with the fine crystal gloss over her that, in brunettes, takes the place of a blonde's bright glow.

She was a stalk of ripe corn, but bound not as cereals are but as a rare first edition, with all the binder's art. She was lovely and expensive and about nineteen.

A frown, the shadow of a hair in breadth appeared between her eyes.

She was eighteen, with such a skin as the Italian painters of the decadence used for corner angels and all the wishing in the world glistening in her grey eyes.

A girl who could send tear-stained telegrams.

Her childish beauty was wistful and sad about being so rich and sixteen.

These were all my choices which—for one reason or another—didn't make the "cut" as F. Stop Kennedy, with stars in his eyes, fills *his* notebook with those that *did* make the cut.

Page 288 – Interestingly enough, I discovered very, very late in the research for "Fall and the River" that the excerpt which begins "She comes up to people…" was about Scottie, Fitzgerald's daughter, the name having been replaced by asterisks in my New Directions Paperback edition of *The Crack Up*. Very strange that it would have been omitted, since Scottie would've been twenty-four at the time *The Crack Up* was released (1945). Edmund Wilson's idea to take it out? Or Zelda's mother/daughter jealousy? Or Zelda's family? Very weird.

Second excerpt, the one that begins "Her voice and the drooping of her eyes…" was actually used in a short story called "Magnetism" written by Fitzgerald in December 1927 (and published March 3, 1928 in the *Saturday Evening Post)*, describing actor George Hannaford's reaction—not to his actress wife Kay, but to eighteen-year-old actress Helen Avery. Helen Avery was another incarnation—the most famous of whom would be Rosemary Hoyt in *Tender is the Night*—of the "teen-aged-actress-and-the-older-man," which became a recurring theme in his work after Fitzgerald met seventeen-year-old actress Lois Moran on his first trip to Hollywood in January and February of 1927.

LOIS MORAN

It's probably best to skip ahead to 1930 and Zelda's first breakdown, when she and Fitzgerald exchanged lengthy and detailed letters on their respective "sides" of their marriage. Regarding that period in 1927, Scott wrote to Zelda:

I made one of those mistakes literary men make—I thought I was "a man of the world—that everybody liked me and admired me for myself but I only liked a few people like Ernest (*Hemingway*) and Charlie McArthur (*playwright and screenwriter*) and Gerald and Sara (*Murphy*) who were my peers. Time goes by fast in those moods and nothing is ever done. I thought then that things came easily—I forgot how I'd dragged the great Gatsby out of the pit of my stomach in a time of misery. I woke up in Hollywood no longer my egotistic, certain self but a mixture of Ernest in fine clothes and Gerald with a career—and Charlie McArthur with a past. Anybody that could make me believe that, like Lois Moran did, was precious to me.

Regarding that same period, in her reply Zelda wrote:

And we were back in America—farther apart than ever before. In California, though you would not allow me to go anywhere without you, you yourself engaged in flagrantly sentimental relations with a child. You said you wanted nothing more from me in all your life, though you made a scene when Carl (*Van Vechten*) suggested that I go to dinner with him and Betty Compson. We came east: I worked over Ellerslie *(the house Fitzgerald rented near Wilmington, Delaware)* incessantly and made it function. There was our first house party and you and Lois—and when there was nothing more to do on the house I began dancing lessons. You did not like it when you saw it made me happy. You were angry about rehearsals and insistent about trains. You went to New York to see Lois and I met Dick Knight *(a New York lawyer)* the night of that party for Paul Morand *(French diplomat and author)*. Again, though you were by then entangled sentimentally, you forbade my seeing Dick and were furious about a letter he wrote me. On the boat coming over you paid absolutely no attention of any kind to me except to refuse me the permission to stay to a concert with whatever-his-name-was.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but I think much of the conflict between Scott and Zelda can be attributed to his inability to recognize that it is impossible for a man to play "adulterous catch-up" with his wife, for the simple reason that most women won't sleep with a married man and most men will sleep with anything in a skirt that moves. In his letter to Zelda's psychiatrist in March of 1932, Scott wrote:

Her affair with Edward Josaune *[sic]* in 1925 (and mine with Lois Moran in 1927, which was a sort of regenge *[sic]* shook something out of us, but we

can't both go on paying and paying forever. And yet I feel that that's the whole trouble back of all this.

It seems to me that the "trouble back of all this"—or at least *part* of the "trouble back of all this" was that the Fitzgeralds' two-month stay in Hollywood (January and February 1927) inverted what had been the construction of their marriage to that point: Zelda's dominance as a flirt and a near (if not actual) adulteress. Most of their social adventures (as I discovered in my research) in America and in France consisted of Scott, a bunch of men, and Zelda. There may have been a wife or two here or there, but single women were as rare as hen's teeth when the two of them were out on the town. I suspect, like most husbands in this situation, Fitzgerald didn't realize what a fool he looked and what a fool he was—nor did he question the wolf pack surrounding his wife, always attributing it to her charisma and vivacity, instead of the potential piece of ass she presented herself as.

That was not the case in Hollywood, a city which has always known whose pocket holds the paycheque (the paycheques tending to be rather larger in Hollywood than elsewhere) and thus ignores the—in the eyes of Hollywood—*interchangeable* spousal custodian whose pocket *doesn't* hold the paycheque. Zelda, I think, gives the game away in a letter to her six-year-old daughter back east: "I want to be in New York *where there's enough mischief for everybody*—that is, if I can't be in Paris" (italics mine). I think this is also the motivation behind a notorious incident (described in Nancy Milford's *Zelda*):

> Samuel Goldwyn gave a costume party for the Talmadge sisters at which Scott and Zelda appeared uninvited. They were found at the street door on all fours, barking, and said they were strangers to Hollywood and couldn't they please come to the party? Colleen Moore remembers that as she was about to get her coat to leave Zelda came in, and they went upstairs together. To her surprise Zelda went into the bathroom and turned on the tub faucets. The young star waited to see what would happen next; Zelda slipped out of her clothes and took a bath. When she emerged, she patted her hair dry, put her clothes back on, and went downstairs to the party.

Zelda's eloquent point being: I am so unnoticed in Hollywood, I bet I could go upstairs and *take a bath* at one of these parties and no one would notice.

Least of all, I must hasten to add, Scott.

In another letter home to Scottie:

> And we have seen so many pretty girls that I did not think there were so many in the world. How would you like to be a moving picture actress when you are a lady? They have pretty houses and lots of money...Everybody here is very clever and can nearly all dance and sing and play and I feel very stupid.

Conventional wisdom having it that Scott and Zelda were an inseparable combination, like pork and beans or rum and coke, Fitzgerald's biographers gloss over Lois Moran. She and her widowed mother (from whom, we are invariably informed, Miss Moran was inseparable, so Lois and Scott were never, never, never, la-la-la-la I'm not listening, alone without Mrs. Moran as chaperone) tend to appear on one page with the Fitzgeralds' arrival in Hollywood in January 1927 and exit two pages later: Mrs. Moran, little Lois, Zelda, and Scott all being great chums together (you see). No mean tactician for a teenager, Lois arranged for F. Scott Fitzgerald to have a screen test (let me echo Gore Vidal with a Fitzgerald fan's greater emphasis on the verb: Where *IS* it?) to see if he might be a suitable leading man for one of her future pictures (I wonder what an actress had to "trade" back in 1927 to get a screen test for someone else; or perhaps the F. Scott Fitzgerald "name value" was enough to make it happen). The screen test was a failure, but you'd never guess that from Zelda's letter home to their six-year-old daughter:

> Daddy was offered a job to be a leading man in a picture with Lois Moran!! But he wouldn't do it. I wanted him to, because he would have made so much money and we could all have spent it, but he said I was silly.

Of course there are the *arguments* over little Lois. Scott defending her that at least *she* was using her talent *for* something and Zelda, evidently taking this in the "unlike-some-people-I-could-name" spirit in which it was intended, burning her (Zelda's) clothes in the bathtub of their bungalow suite of the Ambassador Hotel while Scott is out having dinner with the Miss (and, presumably, Mrs.) Moran. Nancy Milford, Zelda loyalist to the end, introduced the idea that Zelda burned clothes which she had designed and sewn herself, but one tends to take Ms. Milford's "innovations" with a large grain of hen-house salt.

The next argument takes place on the train headed back east, after Scott's screenplay is rejected. Everyone else has Zelda (at the height of the argument) opening the window and throwing her platinum wristwatch—her first "big ticket item" gift from Scott—from the moving train. Except Sara Mayfield, who has it *accidentally* get dropped in the toilet and flushed away. Now, that has to be about as unlikely a piece of invention as you could hope to find anywhere. *Accidentally* dropping a platinum wristwatch into a toilet? *Accidentally* flushing it away? *Sic semper* hen-house biographers.

According to James R. Mellow's *Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984, Boston), a gossip column of the day, pasted into one of Fitzgerald's scrapbooks, listed Lois Moran's favourite authors as "Romain Rolland, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Frederick Nietzche *(sic)* and Rupert Brook." I'll just bet. "She is interested in philosophy and swimming, likes to wear backless evening clothes and *collects*

wristwatches, which she always manages to break." (italics mine.)

It's amazing to watch otherwise diligent journalists pack all this into two pages and slide it quietly into a corner next to Edouard Jozan, stamped "case closed."

There was an exchange of telegrams as the Fitzgeralds' train made its way back to New York—whether before or after the "platinum wristwatch episode" isn't clear (I would guess "before," as in "leading cause"). Lois Moran's:

> BOOTLEGGERS GONE OUT OF BUSINESS COTTON CLUB CLOSED ALL FLAGS AT HALF MAST BOTTLES OF LOVE TO YOU BOTH

And then there was a letter. Did it intercept them en route? Did Scott foolishly show it to Zelda as belated revenge for Edouard Jozan?

> Darling Scott,
>
> I miss you enormously...Life is exceedingly dull out here now...I'm wondering what sort of trip you had—you must have spent all your time filling out telegraph blanks, judging from the numerous and hectic wires Carmel *[Myers]*, John *[Barrymore]* and I received.

Of course, back east Fitzgerald rents Ellerslie, and at their first house party—who do you suppose would visit but little Lois and "Mother" Moran: May 21, 1927, the same weekend Charles Lindbergh landed in Paris. Where Fitzgerald "landed" when the gin was all gone and the lights turned out is perhaps another question. Critic Ernest Boyd and Carl Van Vechten were also there that weekend. Well, here's a good example of the "journalism" applied to the situation, from André le Vot's *F. Scott Fitzgerald:*

> Zelda hid her feelings about Lois, but when Van Vechten returned alone the following week, she seems to have gotten drunk and poured out her resentment of the girl, as we learn from a half-serious, half-joking note she later sent him. "From the depths of my polluted soul," she wrote, "I am sorry the week-end was such a mess. Do forgive my iniquities and my putrid drunkenness. This was such a nice place, and it should have been a good party if I had not explored my abyss in public."

"Half-joking"? Even for someone as strange as Zelda, it would be hard to see any humour in this, and "half-serious" could probably be more accurately replaced with "mordant," "funereal," or "suicidal."

Okay. That's in May. In June, Fitzgerald writes "Jacob's Ladder,"* one of his longest and, easily, his most passionate short story, about a thirty-three-year-old (Fitzgerald was thirty at the time) who gets sixteen-year-old (!) Jenny Delehanty—later Jenny Prince—a screen test, which leads to her becoming a famous movie actress. Although not in love with her at first, he does, subsequently, fall in love with her.

Just a coincidence, I'm sure, but Jacob C. K. Booth is staying at the Ambassador Hotel:

> He went to the window sometime toward three o'clock and stared out into the clear splendor of the California night. Her beauty rested outside on the grass, on the damp, gleaming roofs of the bungalows, all around him, borne up like music on the night. It was in the room, on the white pillow, it rustled ghostlike in the curtains. His desire re-created her until she lost all vestiges of the old Jenny, even of the girl who had met him at the train that morning. Silently, as the night hours went by, he molded her over into an image of love—an image that would endure as long as love itself, or even longer—not to perish till he could say, "I never really loved her." Slowly he created it with this and that illusion from his youth, this and that sad old yearning, until she stood before him identical with her old self only by name.
>
> Later, when he drifted off into a few hours' sleep, the image he had made stood near him, lingering in the room, joined in mystic marriage to his heart.

Yessir, ScottandZelda and their little chum Lois Moran.

Give me a break.

If one actually examines the evidence, I think it's pretty obvious that Scott intended to dump Zelda and marry Lois—when Lois was old enough that it would be less of a scandal. I think Lois Moran knew it and thought it sounded okay to her, her mother knew it and thought it sounded okay to her, and Zelda knew it as well—and it was one of the principal causes of her breakdown in 1930. Whatever else was going on—Scott's drinking, Zelda's dancing lessons—the clock was ticking toward whatever age...20? 21? 22?...Scott had deemed to be "appropriate" or "less inappropriate."

I think the breakdown was the last chance that Zelda saw for her to hold onto Scott, a final desperate pressure

Genesis 28:12: "And he dreamed, and beholde, a ladder set vp on the earth, and the top of it reached to heauen: and beholde the Angels of God ascending and descending on it." It strikes me as significant that a lapsed Catholic like Fitzgerald would select such an archetypal image of a spiritual quandary for the dilemma in which he found himself: Zelda or Lois?

There was something of an outbreak of Jacobs at the time. One of the books Fitzgerald gave Lois was Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (the title is taken from *Ecclesiastes* 1: 5), whose title character was named Jacob Barnes. Fitzgerald's Jacob C. K. Booth can be read as "Jacob Seeks a Booth," a booth being a dwelling place for the original Hebrew people. Jacob eventually had two wives, Leah and Rachel, and I would not rule out that Fitzgerald might have had this on his mind, as well—however stupid an idea it was for 20th-Century America.

tactic: what sort of louse would leave his wife for a young girl after his wife has had to be locked away in an asylum? Essentially, it worked. For the rest of his life—approximately ten years—the lion's share of the money Scott earned from his writing went to pay for Zelda's institutionalized care and his daughter's education. Even had he been inclined to divorce Zelda and marry Lois, he earned barely enough to keep a roof over his own head, let alone his own, Zelda's, Scottie's, and a twenty-something-year-old second wife grown used to the finer things in life.

Lois Moran appeared in several films, including *Love Hungry* (1928), *Mammy* (1930), and *West of Broadway* (1931). She starred on Broadway in *Of Thee I Sing* (music and lyrics by George and Ira Gershwin), which opened December 26, 1931 and had 441 performances.*

All of the stories and articles attributed to "F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald" were actually written by Zelda and "touched up" by Fitzgerald, with the exception of "The Millionaire's Girl" for which (as Fitzgerald writes in a 1934 letter to Zelda) he made no contribution "except for suggesting the theme and working on the proof of the completed manuscript." The rate for their collaborations averaged $400., whereas the price paid by the *Saturday Evening Post* for "solo Scott" was $4000. Sometime in 1930, the theme Scott suggested was "a millionaire intends to marry a young actress" (or something along those lines). This would appear to be Fitzgerald's subtle-as-a-brick-in-the-face way of getting Zelda's input on his romance with Lois. Zelda obliges him sparingly with:

> There was a sense of adventure in the way her high heels sat so precisely in the center of the backs of her long silk legs, and a sense of drama in her conical eyebrows, and *she was much too young to have learned such self-possession in any legitimate way.*

(italics mine) as well as a visit to "Fitzgerald's roadhouse," (presumably Zelda's sharp-eyed assessment of Lois' visit to Ellerslie in 1927):

> Barry *(Scott)* sat under one light in the far end of the long living room, turning over a great pile of phonograph records, and Caroline *(Lois)* sat rigid in the pink shadows, both of them so conscious of the other that they gave the impression of two hidden enemies waiting to attack.

And:

> He was spoiled and wild, but since he had probably met Caroline on some sort of jag, there was no reason why there should be any miscomprehension between them on that score. I wondered how he would explain his intimacy with so lovely and scandalous a person to his austere family, and if they would accept Caroline with no matter what explanation he could invent.

And:

> Of course, all the scandal sheets had a dig at them. There were venomous little paragraphs in most of the Broadway oracles, particularly after people found out how strongly his family disapproved.

And then, finally, the concluding paragraph, which (as I read it) Zelda uses to mix up the Zelda-Scott and Lois-Scott realities—as if to say, "Here. You figure out who I mean":

> She married him, of course, and since she left the films on that occasion, they have had much to reproach each other for. That was three years ago, and so far they have kept their quarrels out of the divorce courts, but I somehow think you can't go on forever protecting quarrels, and that romances born in violence and suspicion will end themselves on the same note; though, of course, I am a cynical person and, perhaps, no competent judge of idyllic young love affairs.

Zelda's name being left off "The Millionaire's Girl" when it appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* (May 31, 1930) is widely believed to be the responsibility of Fitzgerald's literary agent, Harold Ober. I have my doubts. One thing is certain; within a month of writing the story, Zelda checked herself into a psychiatric clinic—Malmaison, outside Paris—for the first time.

Scott Fitzgerald – A Biography (Jeffrey Meyers, 1994, Harper Collins, N.Y.) contains the interesting tidbit that Scott and Lois saw each other several times after Zelda's breakdown—a fact omitted in almost all Fitzgerald biographies:

> Lois' later meetings with Scott in the early 1930s, when he was drinking, depressed about Zelda's illness and apparently beyond redemption, were tortured and miserable. "When I saw him in '33, '34 and '35 he was so different from the man I'd known before, and I was still too young to cope with him," she uneasily explained to *(Fitzgerald's first biographer, Arthur)* Mizener. "With a little more maturity and wisdom, perhaps I could have helped him. Instead, I just wanted to run."

continued next issue

*From *F. Scott Fitzgerald A to Z*, Mary Jo Tate, 1998, Checkmark Books, N.Y.